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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 001186

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SNAR](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: HIGH PROFILE MURDER HIGHLIGHTS ANOTHER BLOODY  
WEEKEND IN CARACAS

REF: A. 2007 CARACAS 2386

[1](#)B. 2008 CARACAS 582

Classified By: Political Counselor Robin D. Meyer  
for Reason 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The kidnapping and murder of a Guardia Nacional (GN) colonel combined with a spike in the overnight murder rates in Caracas and Valencia on September 5 surprised Venezuelan media. However, overall homicide statistics for the weekend remained steady at about one murder per hour. The murder of the GN colonel may bring an immediate response but will not produce the policy changes needed to reduce crime. End Summary.

SATURDAY NIGHT'S ALRIGHT FOR FIGHTING

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Caracas metropolitan morgue was overwhelmed by bodies during the early morning hours of September 5 when 28 homicide victims arrived in less than five hours. Although Caracas weekends average a murder an hour, with some weekends, measured from Friday night to Monday morning, reaching a total of 100 killings (ref a), the understaffed morgue caught the attention of local media. Valencia newspapers, in the nearby state of Carabobo, also no stranger to violence, were stunned to report four unrelated homicides in less than 12 hours.

CROSSING A LINE

[1](#)3. (C) According to local media, a criminal ring known as "The Invisibles," from the rambling eastern Caracas slum of Petare, murdered GN Colonel Hector Luis Trade Parra with seven shots to the head after kidnapping him from the exclusive community of Las Lagunitas. GN officials and family members remained tight-lipped regarding the circumstances of the case, but former police chief Isaac Aponte (strictly protect) told PolOff that Trade was part of "El Cartel de Los Soles," a drug trafficking network run by Guardia Nacional generals, and his murder was the result of a feud between trafficking groups. (Note: RSO received corroborating information that this was part of an ongoing Venezuelan drug war. End Note.)

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: The weekend of September 5 was slightly below the average weekend homicide rate. However, the increased media coverage could reflect an increasing frustration with insecurity in the capital and Chavez's inability to address the problem during his ten years in power. Corrupt or not, the GN will crackdown on criminal gangs in response to the murder of one of their own. Unfortunately, in the absence of strong leadership and integrity in the law enforcement apparatus, Caracas will continue to be the murder capital of South America.

DUDDY